

# BLOOMINGTON CONNECTED

## A SOCIAL COMMUNITY LONG BEFORE NEW MEDIA

By Mayor Gene Winstead

It is the perennial human quest to connect with others that led to Bloomington being home to human settlements for centuries – an attractive setting for people to do more collectively than what they could do by themselves. Before there was ever talk of cloud computing, Bloomington was home to Cloud Man, chief of the Dakota.

Technological advances have led this human quest for connection in new directions. Face-to-face conversations of yesteryear are now conducted on Facebook. Discussions over the backyard fence are now tweeted and the old party line telephone conversations are transferred to video played on YouTube.

Among you who are our longest-term residents, Bloomington was the new suburban frontier. Once a very rural community – farms transformed into single-family subdivisions. Near the airport – the latest in air travel took off. Just beyond the end of the streetcar line – Highway 5 provided major east-west travel and the more critical Highway 65 led the north-south movement into Minneapolis, the hub of the metropolitan area’s economic activity at the time.

With more of you settling and being raised in the community, the paralleling of Highway 65 (Lyndale Avenue) by I-35W and the upgrade of Highway 5 to I-494, as well as the explosion of jet travel, Bloomington became home to an increasing number of jobs with more and more residents able to be employed close to home. By the turn of the current century, there were more jobs in Bloomington than there were residents.

Bloomington became an “edge city” noted for its high-quality offices. Successful communities never let themselves stagnate. Our strategic vision as a Council with broad input from the community is “**To build and renew the community by providing services, promoting renewal and guiding growth in an even more sustainable, fiscally sound manner.**” Among our strategic objectives is to actively enhance our City’s sense of community.

A key to Bloomington’s growth has been its location next to the major ground and air transportation facilities of the metropolitan area – the arteries of our community that bring many of us together. We look to expand those opportunities not only by moving people from place to place, but also by promoting healthier lives through use of the system in more physically active ways. Our vision for higher density, mixed-use, transit-oriented development provides a wider range of living choices in the community, as well as vibrant settings where people can easily connect with each other face to face.

As a City organization, we connect with people through the services we provide. As noted in the February *Briefing*, you get the value of not only what you receive immediately from services, such as emergency fire and police response or snowplowing and street maintenance, but also what those services provide for the longer term in support of you and your investment in the community.

City services are a collection of tangentially related amenities that come together in a seamless fashion during major events that threaten our normal way of life. Recent incidents, including the apartment fire on Nicollet Avenue and the President’s Day blizzard – the most difficult snowstorm since the 1991 Halloween blizzard – had numerous departments such as Fire, Police, Public Works, Community Services and



Community Development, working together to deal with the situations and their aftermath.

To help us further achieve the City’s strategic vision in a multi-channelled, communications-oriented world and to better connect with those who live, work and play in Bloomington, we continue to explore the many ways people want to communicate with us. While watching others test the new social media in the past few years, we have learned from their experiences and, in February, rolled out the City’s social media connections.

These new links go beyond the traditional communications of the telephone, cable TV and even the website with its [webcasts](#), [Ask the City](#) and [E-Subscribe](#) online services. The additions of [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) create new avenues for two-way communication, increase transparency and allow the City to connect with people in Bloomington using their preferred manner of communication, *see page 3*. Although communication is only one of the many ways we connect with the community, the ever increasing opportunities for connection have led to the theme, “Bloomington Connected,” for this year’s State of the City address and for our major communication efforts.

As we look to making Bloomington an even more sustainable community and strengthen our connections as a community, we hope you become a greater “fan” and “friend” of the community we all share.

# BRIEFING

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Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.

# BLOOMINGTON YESTERDAY

## FARMING ON THE LAKE

In 1924, Art Chesher, a retired Minneapolis print shop owner, and his wife Irene, built their dream retirement home “in the country” near the shores of Bush Lake. The cabin, as it was fondly called, was built on an elevated piece of land overlooking the lake, on what is

now South Bay Circle. See photo below.

According to great-granddaughter and Bloomington Environmental Health Manager Lynn Moore, the cabin was a gathering place for friends and family members on holidays and weekends.

Chesher also owned a farm near Hyland Lake. On what is now part of the Hyland Lake Park Reserve, Chesher grew crops, raised cattle and kept sheep, goats, chickens, draft horses and ponies for his three granddaughters, Jean, Dorothy and Marilyn (Moore’s



mother). Although Chesher was especially proud of the Guernsey dairy cattle he raised, one of which won the 1933 prize for Best Pure Breed Sire at the Hennepin County Fair, Marilyn’s favorite animals were a nearly blind draft horse and goat named Billy.

On June 7, 1939, a tornado destroyed the barn at the Hyland Lake farm. Marilyn posed for a photo in front of the demolished barn, above.

